**1 January 1878** Antonín Dvorák (36) attempts to see Johannes Brahms (45) in Vienna but Brahms is out of town. Dvorák will write to Brahms asking that he accept the dedication of his String Quartet op.34. See 23 January 1878.

**3 January 1878** George Whitefield Chadwick (23) matriculates at Leipzig Conservatory.

Anton Bruckner (53) is granted a permanent appointment as court organist, in Vienna.

**4 January 1878**  Russian forces occupy Sofiya.

**5 January 1878** In response to a question from Nadezhda von Meck about the Kuchka, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (37) writes from San Remo, “All the Petersburg composers are very talented, but they are all poisoned to the core with the most horrible conceit and a purely amateur confidence in their own superiority above everyone else in the musical world...”

**9 January 1878** After four days of confused fighting and bad weather, Turkish forces south of the Shipka Pass surrender at Sheinovo to the Russians.

King Vittorio Emanuele II of Italy dies in Rome and is succeeded by his son Umberto I.

150 Cheyenne break out of a military stockade at Fort Robinson, Nebraska. 47 are killed, 23 wounded but 38 escape. Of those who escape, soldiers will kill 23.

**11 January 1878** Ahmed Hamdi Pasha replaces Tunuslu Ibrahim Edhem Pasha to become Chief Minister of the Ottoman Empire.

**17 January 1878** After three days of fighting at Philippopolis (Plovdiv), 130 km southeast of Sofiya, Russian forces decisively defeat the Turks in Bulgaria, ending Turkish resistance in Europe.

By a treaty between the United States and Samoa, Samoa allows a US naval station at Pago Pago.

**18 January 1878** Johannes Brahms (44) begins a tour of mostly the Netherlands with a performance of the First Symphony in Hamburg. His song *Alte Liebe* op.72/1 to words of Candidus, is performed for the first time.

Antoine César Becquerel dies in Paris at the age of 89.

**19 January 1878** *Au Bord de l’eau* op.8/1 for voice and piano by Gabriel Fauré (32) to words of Sully-Prudhomme is performed for the first time, by the Société National de Musique, Paris.

**20 January 1878** Russian troops enter Adrianople (Edirne) without resistance.

**21 January 1878** After almost being lost in the Bay of Biscay, Cleopatra’s Needle arrives at Gravesend from Alexandria.

**22 January 1878** *Mädchenfluch* op.69/9, a song by Johannes Brahms (44) to traditional words, is performed for the first time, in Bremen.

**23 January 1878** Alexander Koumoundouros becomes Prime Minister of Greece.

At the request of Sultan Abdülhamid II, the British government sends a British fleet to Constantinople.

Antonín Dvorák (36) writes to Johannes Brahms (44) asking if he may dedicate his String Quartet op.34 to him. Brahms will agree, with some suggestions for improvement.

**24 January 1878** Anton Bruckner (53) is named a full member of the Vienna Hofkapelle, a salaried position.

The Edison Speaking Phonograph Company is founded.

**26 January 1878** António Maria de Fontes Pereira de Melo replaces António José de Avila, marquês de Avila e Bolama, conde de Avila as Prime Minister of Portugal.

**27 January 1878** *The Cunning Peasant*, a comic opera by Antonin Dvorák (36) to words of Vesely, is performed for the first time, in the Prague Provisional Theatre.

**28 January 1878** The first commercial telephone exchange opens, in New Haven, Connecticut. It has 21 subscribers and is only open during the day.

**31 January 1878** An armistice is signed between Russia and Turkey at Adrianople (Edirne). Russia is allowed to occupy territory within 15 km of Constaninople.

Piano Trio no.1 by Hubert Parry (29) is performed for the first time, in London.

**2 February 1878** Greece declares war on the Ottoman Empire in support of a rising by Greeks in Thessalia. 25,000 troops cross the border.

A new opera house, designed by Gottfried Semper, opens in Dresden.

**3 February 1878** After demands by the western powers, Greece withdraws its troops from Thessalia. Some remain, however, and join guerrilla groups.

**4 February 1878** Ahmed Vefik Pasha replaces Ahmed Hamdi Pasha as Chief Minister of the Ottoman Empire.

**5 February 1878** St. Petersburg Police Chief General Fyodor Trepov is shot by a young woman named Vera Ivanovna Zasulich in retribution for the flogging of a student. Trepov will recover and Zasulich is arrested.

**7 February 1878**  Giovanni Maria Giambattista Pietro Pellegrino Isidoro, conte Mastai-Ferretti, Pope Pius IX, dies in Rome.

**8 February 1878** A British fleet anchors in Turkish waters to forestall a Russian move against Constantinople.

**9 February 1878** After a three-day battle, Cuban rebels defeat Spanish troops near San Ulpiano.

**10 February 1878** The Cuban revolt against Spanish rule ends with the Pact of Zanjón in which Spain promises reforms.

**11 February 1878** *Narcisse*, an idylle antique for solo voices and chorus by Jules Massenet (35) to words of Collin is performed for the first time.

**18 February 1878** In Naples, Ruggero Leoncavallo (20) is informed that he will not have to serve in the military since his older brother has already.

**19 February 1878** Thomas A. Edison receives a US patent for his phonograph.

*Ballsträußchen* op.380, a polka schnell by Johann Strauss (52), is performed for the first time, in the Sophiensaal, Vienna.

**20 February 1878** Gioacchino Vincenzo Raffaele Aloisio Pecci becomes Pope Leo XIII.

**22 February 1878** Symphony no.4 by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (37) is performed for the first time, in Moscow. It is generally successful.

**24 February 1878** A peaceful demonstration in Hyde Park, London by those urging restraint in dealing with Russia is brutally attacked by an anti-Russia mob. The anti-Russians move on to Downing Street to continue their call for war while others attack the house of opposition leader William Gladstone.

**25 February 1878** Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (37) writes to his brother Anatoly from Florence, “Only now, especially after the tale of my marriage, have I finally begun to understand that there is nothing more fruitless than not wanting to be that which I am by nature.”

**28 February 1878** The United States reintroduces a silver standard.

**2 March 1878** Three of the Six Etudes op.52 for piano by Camille Saint-Saëns (42) are performed for the first time, at a concert of the Société National de Musique, Paris.

**3 March 1878** By the Treaty of San Stefano (Yesilköy, Turkey), Russia imposes humiliating concessions on Turkey, including a large, autonomous Bulgaria. Kars, Ardahan and Batumi go to Russia.

A suite from Jules Massenet’s (35) opera *Le Roi de Lahore* is performed for the first time, in Paris. See 27 April 1877.

**11 March 1878** A Piano Trio in c minor by George Whitefield Chadwick (23) is performed for the first time, in the Hôtel du Pologne, Leipzig, the composer at the piano.

**13 March 1878** *Maître Péronilla*, an opéra-bouffe by Jacques Offenbach (58) to words of Nuitter, Ferrier, and the composer, is performed for the first time, at the Bouffes-Parisiens, Paris.

**15 March 1878** The definitive version of *The Two Widows*, a comic opera by Bedrich Smetana (54) to words of Züngel after Mallefille, is performed for the first time, in the Provisional Theatre, Prague. See 27 March 1874.

**16 March 1878** The Caribbean island of Saint Barthelemy is transferred by Sweden to French control.

**18 March 1878** *Willst du, daß ich gehen?* op.71/4, a song for voice and piano by Johannes Brahms (44) to words of Lemcke, is performed for the first time, in Hamburg.

**23 March 1878** Franz August Julius Schrecker is born in Monaco, oldest of four surviving children of Ignaz (Isak) Schrecker, Jewish Imperial and Royal Court Photographer, and Eleonore von Clossmann, descended from Austrian Catholic nobility.

Irredentist sympathizer Benedetto Cairoli replaces Agostino Depretis as Prime Minister of Italy.

**24 March 1878** Jules Massenet (35) meets the new Pope, Leo XIII in an audience at the Vatican. Later he is presented to Queen Margherita, now the Queen Mother for whom he plays selections from *Le Roi de Lahore*.

The frigate *HMS Eurydice* goes down in a storm off the Isle of Wight taking 317 crewmen with her. Only two survive.

Piano Concerto op.33 by Antonin Dvorák (36) is performed for the first time, in Prague.

**31 March 1878** The Munich Hoftheater, directed by King Ludwig II, agrees to pay off the Bayreuth Festival’s debt based on receipts of royalties from the production of Richard Wagner’s (64) works. The Munich Hoftheater receives the right to perform *Parsifal* free after the Bayreuth premiere. Bayreuth is finally solvent.

**4 April 1878** This is the probable date of Friedrich Nietzsche’s visit to his doctor, Otto Eiser, in Frankfurt. After his examination, Eiser, a fervent Wagnerite, shows Nietzsche a letter from Richard Wagner (54) wherein the composer accuses the philosopher of homosexuality. Nietzsche explodes. “Why Nietzsche broke with Wagner is something that I alone know, for the break took place under my roof, in my surgery...Nietzsche was beside himself--the words that he found for Wagner are unrepeatable.” (Köhler, 526).

**7 April 1878** *Herbstlied* for chorus and piano by Engelbert Humperdinck (23), to words of G. Humperdinck, is performed for the first time, in the Musikschule, Munich.

**8 April 1878** Johannes Brahms (44) begins his long-desired tour of Italy.

Three songs by Johannes Brahms (44) are performed for the first time, in Vienna: *Tambourliedchen* op.69/5, to words of Candidus, *Es liebt sich so lieblich im Lenze!* op.71/1 to words of Heine, and *An den Mond*, op.71/2 to words of Simrock.

Much to the dismay of his parents, Charles Villiers Stanford (25) marries a singer, Jennie Anna Maria Wetton, daughter of an adventurer and land speculator, at Ockley parish church, Surrey.

**11 April 1878** *Mein wundes Herz verlangt* op.59/7, a song by Johannes Brahms (46) to words of Groth, is performed for the first time, in Vienna.

*Großes Duo* for two pianos by Hubert Parry (30) is performed for the first time, in London.

**12 April 1878** Vera Ivanovna Zasulich goes on trial in St. Petersburg, charged with shooting Police Chief Fyodor Trepov last February. When the jury finds her not guilty, shouts of joy and approval erupt in the courtroom and out into the street.

**17 April 1878** The British government dispatches 7,000 Indian troops to Malta to counter Russian moves against the Ottoman Empire. It is the first time that Indian native troops are deployed outside of India.

**18 April 1878** Mehmed Sadik Pasha replaces Ahmed Vefik Pasha as Chief Minister of the Ottoman Empire.

**21 April 1878** The first White House Easter Egg Roll takes place. Previously it was held at the Capitol but the Congress banned the event and President Hayes accepted it on the grounds of the White House.

**23 April 1878** Duo concertante for violin and violoncello op.33 by John Knowles Paine (39) is performed for the first time, in Sanders Theatre at Harvard University. This was to be the premiere of the composer’s *Spring Symphony*, but when this is not ready, the Duo concertante is substituted. The audience applauds each movement.

**28 April 1878** Today and tomorrow in Leipzig, Richard Wagner’s (54) *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* are performed for the first time outside Bayreuth with the composer’s blessings.

Swiss physicist Louis Soret publishes his discovery of the element Holmium.

**30 April 1878** A large irredentist rally takes place in Rome, causing official protests from Austria and Germany.

**1 May 1878** The Exposition Universelle of 1878 opens in Paris. 250,000 visitors will see it in the first week.

**5 May 1878** Johannes Brahms (44) writes to Simrock advocating the publication of Antonin Dvorák’s (36) music. “The best that a musician can have, Dvorák has...”

**11 May 1878** A tinker named Emil Max Hödel, recently expelled from the Leipzig Social-Democratic Association, attempts to kill Kaiser Wilhelm I by firing several shots at him in Berlin. He misses, but kills a bystander, and is finally restrained by the crowd.

**14 May 1878** At a meeting in St. Petersburg, Ambassador to Britain Count Shuvalov presents a plan for peace to Tsar Alyeksandr that he worked out with British Foreign Minister Lord Salisbury. The Russians are relieved that it is not worse than it is.

Robert Chesebrough trademarks his invention, petroleum jelly, under the name Vaseline.

**15 May 1878** The Tokyo Stock Exchange is established.

**16 May 1878** Slavonic Dances nos. 1, 3, and 4 by Antonin Dvorák (36) are performed for the first time, in Prague. See 4 December 1878.

**17 May 1878** Incidental music to Tillier’s play *Nina Zombi* by Camille Saint-Saëns (42) and ten others is performed for the first time, in Cercle Volney de la Rue Saint-Arnaud.

**18 May 1878** Colombia grants a nine-year concession for a canal across the Isthmus of Panama to a French company.

**21 May 1878** The rebel government of Cuba ratifies the Pact of Zanjón signed on 10 February.

**22 May 1878** A Requiem by Camille Saint-Saëns (42) is performed for the first time, at Saint Sulpice, Paris. The work is in memory of Albert Libon who died last year and left the composer 100,000 francs.

**25 May 1878** *HMS Pinafore, or The Lass that Loved a Sailor*, an operetta by Arthur Sullivan (36) to words of Gilbert, is performed for the first time, in the Opera Comique Theatre, London, the composer conducting. The public is appreciative but the reviews are decidedly mixed. Many comment that Sullivan is wasting his talent on such trivialities. However, the play will run 571 performances.

**28 May 1878** André Saint-Saëns, four-year-old son of the composer (42), leans out the window of his Paris home to talk to playmates and falls four stories to his death.

Seven weeks after the death of his wife, Johann Strauss, Jr. (52) marries Ernestine Henriette Angelika Dittrich, an actress, in Vienna.

**29 May 1878** String Quartet no.1 by George Whitefield Chadwick (23) is performed for the first time, in the Gewandhaus, Leipzig.

**30 May 1878** Great Britain and Russia conclude a secret treaty, limiting the borders of Bulgaria given in the Treaty of San Stefano.

**31 May 1878** *SMS König Wilhelm* of the Germany Royal Navy accidentally rams *SMS Großer Kurfürst* off Folkestone. The *Großer Kurfürst* goes down quickly, taking about 270 crewmen with her. Severely damaged, the *König Wilhelm* makes for Portsmouth for repairs. On his way to Paris, Arthur Sullivan (36) witnesses the entire event.

**1 June 1878** Trading opens at the Tokyo Stock Exchange.

**2 June 1878** Dr. Karl Nobiling of Posen (Poznan) attacks and severely wounds Kaiser Wilhelm I. The assassin attempts to kill himself and will die of his wounds in three months. His motives are not known, although Chancellor Bismarck uses the event to suppress the Social Democrats.

**4 June 1878** Modest Musorgsky (39) is promoted to Collegiate Councillor in the Russian Forestry Department.

By a secret convention between Great Britain and Turkey, the British agree to support Turkey against Russian encroachments in Asia in return for Cyprus and Turkish internal reforms.

A setting of *Tota pulchra es* for tenor, chorus, and organ by Anton Bruckner (53) is performed for the first time, in the Votivkapelle des neuen Doms, Linz.

**6 June 1878** Great Britain and Austria-Hungary conclude a treaty in Vienna. Austria agrees to the same limitations on Bulgaria that Russia agreed to, in return for Bosnia-Herzegovina and the continued separation of Montenegro and Serbia.

**10 June 1878** The League for the Defense of the Rights of the Albanian Nation is officially founded in Prizren.

Henry Stanley meets with King Leopold II of Belgium at his palace at Laeken to discuss the exploitation of the Congo.

**12 June 1878** *Introductory Overture for the Christy Minstrels* for flute, cornet, and strings by Edward Elgar (21) is performed for the first time, in the Worcester Music Hall, the composer conducting.

**13 June 1878** The Congress of Berlin opens, attended by Great Britain, Austria, France, Italy, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire. Many nations are fearful of growing Russian power in the Balkans.

**15 June 1878** In Palo Alto, California, English photographer Eadweard Muybridge sets up a series of cameras to take pictures of a horse and rider as they gallop by. The photographs he takes will be placed on a disc to be viewed sequentially on a zoopraxiscope, thus producing “moving pictures.” He is also able to prove (his original intent) that all four hooves of a galloping horse are off the ground simultaneously.

**18 June 1878** Albanian leaders meeting in Prizren declare their support for the Ottoman Empire and its territorial integrity and their opposition to the independence of Serbia and Bulgaria.

**19 June 1878** Hubert Joseph Walthère Frère-Orban replaces Jules Malou as head of government for Belgium.

**20 June 1878** *The Sweetheart’s Resolve* from the song cycle *Bouquet of Czech Folk Songs* for male chorus by Antonín Dvorák (36) is performed for the first time, in Brünn (Brno).

**23 June 1878** United States troops raid Bannock Indian camp on Silver Creek in Harney County, Oregon. 100 Indians are killed, over 100 are wounded.

**27 June 1878** The prologue to *Les béatitudes*, an oratorio by César Franck (55) to words of the Bible adapted by Colomb, is performed for the first time, in the Trocadéro, Paris. See 15 June 1891.

*Les Djinns* op.12 for chorus and orchestra by Gabriel Fauré (33) to words of Hugo is performed for the first time with orchestral accompaniment, by the Société National de Musique, Paris. See 22 April 1876.

**1 July 1878** *The Providence Daily Journal* (Rhode Island) announces that a recent immigrant, Prof. Maximilian Berlitz, is now taking pupils in French and German. He will be successful.

**2 July 1878** A piano quintet by Gustav Mahler (17) is awarded first prize in composition at the Vienna Conservatory. Thus completes his education at the Conservatorium der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde

**5 July 1878** The earliest documented composition by Pietro Mascagni (14) is dated today. It is a song entitled *Duolo eterno!*

**7 July 1878** Little more than a month after the death of his four-year-old son, Camille Saint-Saëns’ (42) eight-month-old baby Jean dies of “an infantile malady.” Within three years, the composer will leave his wife, never to see her again. (She will die on 30 January 1950.)

**11 July 1878** The scherzo of a Piano Quintet by Gustav Mahler (18) is performed for the first time, at the Vienna Conservatory, the composer at the keyboard. This quintet won the first prize in composition at the Conservatory on 2 July.

**12 July 1878** Great Britain begins to administer Cyprus under the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire.

A *Credo* for solo voices, chorus, and orchestra by Giacomo Puccini (19) is performed for the first time, in the Church of San Paolino, Lucca.

**13 July 1878** The Treaty of Berlin is signed by representatives of Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Ottoman Empire, and Russia. It creates Bulgaria with an autonomous Christian government under Turkish rule, sets up Eastern Roumelia under direct rule of the Sultan but with a Christian governor-general, calls for the removal of Russian troops from Easter Roumelia, provides for the occupation and administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary, establishes an independent Montenegro, Serbia, and Romania, and grants Bessarabia to Russia.

**15 July 1878** *Die Wallfahrt nach Kevlaar* for alto, tenor, chorus, and orchestra by Engelbert Humperdinck (23) to words of Heine, is performed for the first time, in the Königliche Musikschule, Munich.

**21 July 1878** Irredentists rally in Rome calling on volunteers to capture Trentino for Italy.

**25 July 1878** *La mort d’Orphée*, a lyric scene for tenor, chorus, and orchestra by Léo Delibes (42), is performed for the first time, in the Trocadéro, Paris.

**26 July 1878** A Russian mission is received in Kabul, causing the British government to send an ultimatum to the Afghan government.

Edward MacDowell (17) participates in his first concours at the Paris Conservatoire before a committee which includes Henri Herz (75), Camille Saint-Saëns (42), and Ambroise Thomas (66). His prepared piece goes well, but his sight-reading from manuscript is a disaster when he mistakenly plays the piece in minor, abruptly switching to major in the middle when he realizes his mistake. Among the other pianists is Claude Debussy (15).

**27 July 1878** Two crew members infected with yellow fever disembark from a boat in Vicksburg, Mississippi.

**28 July 1878** In an attempt to stop the yellow fever epidemic from the south, the mayor of Memphis, Tennessee declares a quarantine.

**30 July 1878** Voting for the fourth Reichstag of the German Empire results in a loss of 30 seats for the leading National Liberals. They now hold only five more seats than the second place Center Party.

The Bell Telephone Company is incorporated in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

**7 August 1878** Alexandre Guilmant inaugurates the organ at the Trocadéro, Paris.

The Regional School Board of Brünn (Brno) refuses a request by one of its teachers, Leos Janácek (24), to fund a trip to St. Petersburg to study with Anton Rubinstein (48).

**10 August 1878** After 431 reported cases and 118 deaths, the Louisiana State Board of Health declares that a yellow fever epidemic is in progress.

**13 August 1878** One man dies of yellow fever in Memphis causing about 25,000 residents (over half the population) to flee the city.

**15 August 1878** *Hymn to the Most Holy Trinity* for voice and organ by Antonin Dvorák (36) is performed for the first time, in Sychrov.

**16 August 1878** Emil Max Hödel is beheaded in Berlin for attempting to kill Kaiser Wilhelm I last May.

**17 August 1878** In Belgium, the Second Law on the Use of Languages allows Flemish to be used in official transactions in Flanders.

**24 August 1878** At a promenade concert at Covent Garden, Arthur Sullivan (36) conducts a compilation of music from *HMS Pinafore* by Hamilton Clarke. The music is extremely popular with the public and the press and will ensure the success of the operetta currently in production.

**30 August 1878** Vladimir Stasov writes to Mily Balakirev (42) from Paris, “In front of our very eyes, Musorgsky (39), one of our most talented comrades and brothers, is sinking to the bottom, silently plunging deeper and deeper into the water, like a ship in which the cursed worms have gnawed a hole through the bottom. He is surrounded by disgusting drunks and scoundrels of the crudest and lowest sort...they are dragging him down and destroying him because of his weak and impressionable nature...The point is to separate and remove him from that vile drunken crowd and from all the inactivity.”

**3 September 1878** The coal ship *Bylwell Castle* strikes the paddle steamship *Princess Alice* in the Thames River off Tripcock Point. The *Princess Alice* goes down in minutes taking around 650 people with her.

**12 September 1878** A large ancient obelisk from Egypt is erected in London and dubbed “Cleopatra’s Needle.”

**15 September 1878** *Festive Chorus* for the consecration of the new building of the Imperial and Royal Slavonic Teachers’ Institute by Leos Janácek (24) to words possibly by Kucera is performed for the first time, in Brünn (Brno).

**17 September 1878** Elections to the Fourth Parliament of Canada take place. The Liberal government of Alexander Mackenzie is defeated by the Conservatives, and John A. Macdonald is returned to office.

**18 September 1878** After serialization in *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The Europeans* by Henry James is published in book form in London.

*The Secret*, a comic opera by Bedrich Smetana (54) to words of Krásnohorská, is performed for the first time, in the New Czech Theatre, Prague.

**20 September 1878** *Valse-scherzo* op.34 for violin and orchestra by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (38) is performed for the first time, in Paris.

**21 September 1878** *Regnum mundi* for chorus and organ by Leos Janácek (24) is performed for the first time.

Today and tomorrow see the first performances of Richard Wagner’s (65) *Siegried* and *Götterdammerung* outside Bayreuth. They are produced with the composer’s blessings, in Leipzig.

**23 September 1878** Richard D’Oyly Carte takes WS Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan (36) to the spot on the Strand in London where he proposes to build his theatre to produce their operettas.

**1 October 1878** Jules Massenet (36) is appointed professor of counterpoint, fugue, and composition at the Paris Conservatoire.

César Franck (55) premieres his Trois pieces in a recital of all his own works, on the new organ of the Trocadéro, Paris.

**4 October 1878** China establishes its first embassy in the United States.

**7 October 1878** *Polyeucte*, an opéra by Charles Gounod (60) to words of Barbier and Carré after Corneille, is performed for the first time, at the Paris Opéra. The work is not successful.

**11 October 1878** Austria-Hungary and Prussia agree to annul the clause in the Peace of Prague calling for a plebiscite in Schleswig.

**12 October 1878** Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (38) informs Director Nikolay Rubinstein that he will leave his post at Moscow Conservatory within a month.

**13 October 1878** Through the efforts of Mily Balakirev (41) and Vladimir Stasov, Modest Musorgsky (39) is transferred to a position in the Office of Government Control, just before he is about to be fired from the Forestry Department.

Jovan Ristic replaces Stevca Mihailovic as Prime Minister of Serbia.

**15 October 1878** The first electric company incorporates. The Edison Electric Light Company in New York City begins selling shares to finance development of the incandescent lamp.

**17 October 1878** John Alexander Macdonald replaces Alexander Mackenzie as Prime Minister of Canada.

**18 October 1878** Today is Pytor Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s (38) last day as a teacher at Moscow Conservatory.

**19 October 1878** A British mission to Kabul is refused entry, precipitating war.

The German Reichstag passes a law designed to suppress socialism.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (38) departs Moscow for St. Petersburg, having resigned his post at the Moscow Conservatory. “And so, at last, I am a free man.”

**20 October 1878** The Frankfurt Conservatory fetes their newest faculty member, Clara Schumann (59). She is escorted down a flower-strewn path to a chair bedecked with garlands to listen to speeches, receive a laurel wreath, and listen to a concert of her own works by students and teachers.

The first and third of the Four Choruses op.29 by Antonin Dvorák (37) to words of Heyduk and a Moravian folk poem are performed for the first time, in Turnov.

**22 October 1878** Swiss chemist Jean-Charles-Galissard de Marignac reports his discovery of the element Ytterbium.

*O kühler Wald* op.72/3, a song for voice and piano by Johannes Brahms (45) to words of Brentano, is performed for the first time, in Breslau.

**24 October 1878** Clara Schumann (59) is given a day of celebration in Leipzig, commemorating the 50th anniversary of her first public performance at the Leipzig Gewandhaus. In the morning she receives numerous presents, telegrams and flowers. At her concert, she plays Robert Schumann’s (†22) Piano Concerto. The orchestra presents her with a laurel wreath, with the names of composers whose music she performed during her career on the leaves. Later, she attends a party in her honor, serenaded by the Paulinerchor on her arrival.

**25 October 1878** After several insurrections, the Sultan Abdülhamid II, with British urging, signs the Pact of Halépa which promises reforms on Crete.

**26 October 1878** *The Betrayed Shepherd* from the song cycle *Bouquet of Czech Folk Songs* for male chorus by Antonín Dvorák (37) is performed for the first time, in Brünn (Brno).

**29 October 1878** String Quartet no.1 op.27 by Edvard Grieg (35) is performed for the first time, in the concert hall of the Cologne Conservatory. The composer is present, participating in other sections of the program. It is a great success.

**2 November 1878** Charilaos Spiridonou Trikoupis replaces Alexandros Koumoundouros as Prime Minister of Greece.

**7 November 1878** Alexandros Koumoundouros replaces Charilaos Spiridonou Trikoupis as Prime Minister of Greece.

**8 November 1878** President Aníbal Pinto Garmendia of Chile protests to President Hilarión Daza of Bolivia for imposing a heavy tax on a Chilean mining company in Antofagasta, in violation of their treaty.

**9 November 1878** *Frühlingslied* D.914 for male vocal quartet by Franz Schubert (†49) to words of Pollak is performed for the first time, in the Musikvereinsaal, Vienna, 51 years after it was composed.

**15 November 1878** Antonin Dvorák (37) gains international fame when his Slavonic Dances and Moravian Duets are given a rave notice in the *Berlin Nationalzeitung*.

**16 November 1878** As he enters the Senate chamber in Lima, former President Manuel Pardo is shot to death by Sgt. Melchor Montoya. Montoya blames Pardo for his lack of advancement.

**17 November 1878** Anarchist Giovanni Passannante attacks King Umberto I of Italy with a knife during a parade in Naples. The king is able to defend himself and is only slightly wounded but, in attempting to protect the king, Prime Minister Benedetto Cairoli receives a serious leg wound.

Five new works by Antonin Dvorák (37) are performed for the first time, in Prague: the *Slavonic Rhapsodies nos.1&2* for orchestra, the Serenade for winds and strings, Three Modern Greek Poems for voice and orchestra and *Furiants* for piano.

**18 November 1878** Anarchists throw a bomb into a crowd in Florence, assembled to celebrate the survival of King Umberto yesterday. Three people are killed, ten injured.

Edward MacDowell (17) and his mother board a train in Paris, leaving the Conservatoire for the Royal Conservatory in Stuttgart.

**21 November 1878** British forces in India invade Afghanistan in two places.

**25 November 1878** A Comité d’Etudes du Haut-Congo is formed for a Belgian advance into the Congo.

*La corona d’Italia* for band by Gioachino Rossini (†10) is performed for the first time, in Rome. It was written in 1868 when King Vittorio Emanuele II nominated Rossini for the Grand Knight of the Order of the Crown of Italy, but never performed. The production today is by seven massed bands plus 30 drummers.

**26 November 1878** The libel suit of painter John McNeill Whistler against critic John Ruskin is decided by a London jury in favor of Whistler. He is awarded one farthing in damages.

**30 November 1878** On the second ballot, Jules Massenet (36) is elected to the Institut de France over Camille Saint-Saëns (43).

**1 December 1878** Alexander Graham Bell installs the first telephone in the White House, Washington.

**2 December 1878** Invading British troops defeat an Afghan force six times their size at the Peiwar Kotal.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (38) arrives in Florence and takes up residence in an apartment provided for him by Nadezhda von Meck. She is living just two doors down.

*Unüberwindlich* op.72/5, a song by Johannes Brahms (45) to words of Goethe, is performed for the first time, in Hamburg.

**4 December 1878** This month sees the first complete performance of the *Slavonic Dances* of Antonin Dvorák (37), in Dresden. Tonight, nos.1-4 are performed. See 16 May 1878 and 18 December 1878.

**8 December 1878** *Warum ist das Licht gegeben* op.74/1, a motet by Johannes Brahms (45), is performed for the first time, in Vienna.

Sarabande for string quartet by Leos Janácek (24) is performed for the first time, in Brünn (Brno).

**9 December 1878** The overture to Johann Strauss’ (53) unperformed operetta *Blindekuh* is heard for the first time, in Theater-an-der-Wien. See 18 December 1878.

**11 December 1878** The British send an ultimatum to King Cetewayo of the Zulus demanding a protectorate over Zululand.

**12 December 1878** Antonín Dvorák (37) travels from Prague to Vienna where he will make the acquaintance of Johannes Brahms (45), who has already championed his music.

**13 December 1878** Twenty Yablochkov candles go into operation on London’s Victoria embankment. This makes England the second country (after France) to have electric street lighting.

**15 December 1878** *Der Schmied* op.19/4, a song by Johannes Brahms (45) to words of Uhland, is performed for the first time, in Basel.

*Idyll* for string orchestra by Leos Janácek (24) is performed for the first time, in Brünn (Brno), conducted by the composer. Antonin Dvorák (37) is in attendance at the invitation of the conductor.

**18 December 1878** Agostino Depretis replaces Benedetto Cairoli as Prime Minister of Italy.

The French passenger ship *SS Byzantin* strikes the British *SS Rinaldo* in heavy seas off Gallipoli and goes down with 150 people. About 100 passengers and crew survive.

*Blindekuh*, an operetta by Johann Strauss (53) to words of Kneisel, is performed for the first time, in Theater-an-der-Wien, Vienna. It is undoubtedly the composer’s worst disaster.

The first complete performance of Antonin Dvorák’s (37) *Slavonic Dances* concludes with nos. 5-8, in Dresden. See 4 December 1878.

John “Black Jack” Kehoe is hanged in Pottsville, Pennsylvania. He is the last of the Molly Maguires to meet this fate.

**19 December 1878** The Austrian government closes down the *Leseverein*, the Reading Society of Vienna’s German Students. It is considered too socialistic.

*The Mandarin’s Son*, a comic opera by Cesar Cui (43) to words of Krylov, is performed for the first time, at the Artists’ Club, St. Petersburg.

**20 December 1878** The members of the *Leseverein* take to Vienna’s streets, protesting yesterday’s decree.

**25 December 1878** The Prelude to Richard Wagner’s (65) unperformed music drama *Parsifal* is performed for the first time, at Wahnfried in Bayreuth, for the birthday of the composer’s wife, Cosima. See 26 July 1882.

**28 December 1878** Giuseppe Verdi (65) is elected an honorary member of the Academy of Sciences, Letters, and Arts in Modena.

Pope Leo XIII issues the encyclical *Quod Apostolici Muneris* on the evils of socialism.

An open dress rehearsal of the first four scenes of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s (38) unperformed opera *Yevgeny Onyegin* takes place at Moscow Conservatory. See 29 March 1879.

*Madame Favart*, an opéra-comique by Jacques Offenbach (59) to words of Chivot and Duru, is performed for the first time, at the Folies-Dramatiques, Paris.

**29 December 1878** String Quartet no.7 op.16 by Antonin Dvorák (37) is performed publicly for the first time, in Prague. See 17 June 1875.

**31 December 1878** By this date, over 5,000 people are confirmed dead from yellow fever in Memphis, Tennessee. In New Orleans, over 4,600 deaths are reported. The entire Mississippi valley sees 120,000 cases with 20,000 deaths.

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